

DDS Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council (ASDAC)
Special Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2016

Members Present: Deputy Commissioner Scheff, Representative Cathy Abercrombie, Bill Halsey, Judy Dowd, Doriana Vicedomini, Ann Gionet, Nikki Richer, Sara Lourie, Yana Razumnaya, Carole Ryan-Hanlon, Jim Loomis, Beth Leslie, Zachary Laudano, Ruth Eren, Lynn Ricci, Isabelina Rodriguez

Members Absent: Lois Rosenwald, Marcia Eckerd, John Pelegano

Call to Order: 10:06am

Welcome and Introduction by Deputy Commissioner Jordan Scheff:

This special meeting was called to discuss the transition of the DDS Autism Division to DSS effective July 1, 2016.

Questions/Comments:

- Questions regarding the technicalities of implementing Sections 48 – 59 of Public Act 16-3, *AAC Revenue and Other Items to Implement the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2017*, as it relates to the transfer of the autism division from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to the Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Summary of the Autism Division move to DDS
- Concerns regarding reporting of abuse and neglect
 - Approximately 2 investigations per year
 - Responsibility will stay with DDS
- Questions regarding definition of qualifications (2nd page of bill)
- Questions regarding specifics of transition from DDS to DSS – Number of staff transferring to DSS Autism
- Discussion of updating bylaws to reflect any potential changes/functions to the Advisory Council?

Approval of Minutes: Motion to Accept by Doriana Vicedomini (advocate), and seconded

Deputy Commissioner Jordan Scheff:

- Passed out revised bylaws reflecting changes to composition
- Explained implementation issues associated with the expansion of the state plan services and the July 1, 2016 elimination of Early Childhood Autism Waiver.
- Transition of ASD services to DSS. DDS and DSS have been meeting and continue to discuss the transition to make it as successful and seamless as possible

- Presented summaries from groups and feasibility study initiatives.
 - Additional status updates will be presented in June
- Bill Halsey presented updates on autism activities in DSS.
 - Specific areas to be addressed or prioritized as part of the transition and asked for suggestions.
 - Services - state plan services and waiver services. Waiver staff and waiver manager, staff that is transferring to DSS will continue to support the waiver. State plan is already an effective collaboration.
 - Contract with Beacon. Leaning on Beacon to do the day to day services. Staff that transfers over to DSS will continue to support waiver services.
 - Children under 21 with work to transition to Beacon.
 - DSS – trying to match services currently on the waiver. DSS wants to match 1 to 1. Services not available on state plan side will remain on the waiver.
- Lynn Ricci (provider) expressed that it is the providers' intent that individuals be able to receive the same services that they are now receiving, after the change
- Carole Ryan-Hanlon (provider) asked whether children moving to DSS will receive hours through Beacon or DDS.
 - Bill responded that children will transition to state plan services
 - Will need to have a transition plan. Can't transition to state plan services until transition allows for it.
 - DSS is trying to update fee schedule to attract more treatment providers on state plan side
 - Children on the Lifespan waiver will not come off of the lifespan waiver unless there's a match for state plan services.
- Deputy Commissioner Jordan Scheff responded that because details include technical and physical issues, transition will take some time.
- Bill Halsey solicited any suggestions to make the transition smoother.
 - Beth Leslie from the Office of Protection and Advocacy (OPA) suggested that communication is key, that the agencies should use their websites to get the word out. That it would help allay worried families
 - Representative Cathy Abercrombie asked for suggestions of other ways to communicate with families?
 - Lynn Ricci suggested that family forums would be helpful and offered to host them
 - Representative Cathy Abercrombie said that forums present challenges with families, daycare and asked whether day or night is better?
 - Lynn Ricci said that they could accommodate families if that would make scheduling meetings easier

- Doriana Vicedomini (advocate) said that when DCF makes changes they go where the families already are. Support groups, etc. and suggested DSS do this too
- Representative Cathy Abercrombie asked how to do outreach to those groups? And asked how can we better get the word out?
- Bill reported that there is already intensive communication with the providers to make sure they understand the transition and can better articulate changes to the parents
- Doriana Vicedomini suggested drafting something to share and setting up forums
- Anne Gionet from the Department of Public Health suggested that community providers should be communicated with. Families are trying to access Beacon services but are having issues finding providers. We want to reinforce that the move is not being made only for financial gain. That it is to create a better quality system
- Judy Dowd from the Office of Policy and Management reinforced that this is not being done for financial gain. That there were no reduction in autism funding or services. This move was to create administrative efficiencies.
- Anne said that it looks to families that services are being reduced
- Jim Loomis (licensed professional) suggested that DDS Case Managers be briefed so they can reassure families.
- Yana Razumnaya (self-advocate) suggested that someone go to social skills groups to explain. She said families are unhappy and worried because they are hearing about state layoffs
- Doriana Vicedomini (advocate) reinforced this saying they are hearing about the cuts and that it is creating confusion and asked for specifics
- Judy reinforced that there are no intentional reductions to autism services. That although it is not expected, there could be collective bargaining impacts such as bumping
- Sarah Laurie from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) suggested that any communications include explanations of Medicaid and how it impacts the plan
- Bill Halsey suggested any explanations divide by age. That under 21, individuals can access state plan services. Over 21s must get on the waiting list for the Lifetime waiver
- Ruth Eren asked which agency school-aged children would be referred to for services. Especially if they had ID and ASD?
- Lynn Ricci suggested visualizing with a grid and asked how the existence of psychiatric diagnosis impacts agency assignment
- Bill responded that depending upon conditions, there would need to be a multiple agency strategy.
- Representative Cathy Abercrombie talked about legislation that assigned the Complex Care Committee, a subcommittee of MAPOC, to address the kind of children that don't fit neatly under one agency's target population.

- Representative Abercrombie also reported on efforts to make sure that school districts are submitting Medicaid claims for autism services being provided in schools? She said that state staff is investigating resources to help the school districts. She emphasized that both the state and districts could use additional Medicaid reimbursement.
- Isabelina Rodriguez from the State Department of Education (SDE) agrees that Medicaid funding would help districts. But that there would be more incentive for them to bill if the funding went to the LEAs and not to the towns.
- Ruth Eren asked whether someone needs a DSM 4 or 5 diagnosis to qualify for Medicaid reimbursed services
- Representative Abercrombie said that SDE uses the IDEA definition for autism and that the new statutory definition uses the DSM 5. She said we will have to investigate whether the individual needs both definitions to qualify for Medicaid
- Isabelina Rodriguez said that she believes the IDEA definition is enough but will check into this and several other questions/potential impacts
- Doriana Vicedomini presented on Autism Awareness Day
- Bill reinforced that nothing dramatic will happen 7/1/2016 date. That much work needs to be done for the transition.

Adjournment: 11:12am

Next meeting is **Wednesday, June 22, 2016**
10:00am-12:00pm
Legislative Office Building
Room 2A